

A few words from the Vicar

'And get the fatted calf and kill it, and let us eat and celebrate.' (Luke 15:23)

There is nothing to report regarding our forming a team ministry with the Radcliffe parishes. So, if there is nothing to say about the new team, what else can I talk about?

Well, there is a strong possibility that an OLM (i.e. self-supporting priest) might be joining us soon. Hopefully, by the time you read this article, this will be imminent and I will have said more through other channels. Watch this space.

Also, this year is our 500th anniversary. Well, sort of anniversary anyway. We don't know exactly when Christ Church was actually founded – sometime during the Middle Ages - but the earliest record of our existence dates from 1515 when Cockey Chapel was mentioned in evidence given during a court case!

So, if nobody minds, we'll treat 2015 as our 500th anniversary.

And why not? We have a thriving Church, churches are families and families celebrate important anniversaries - so why shouldn't we celebrate our 500th?

So, how are we celebrating?

- There will be a special service on 28th June (the present church building was consecrated on 30th June 1832);
- I've put in a request with Bishops court for us to host a Confirmation service at the end of June (I'm still awaiting a reply); and
- We will be holding a Flower Festival on 10th – 12th July.

Finally, for the comfort of the congregation we also plan to mark our anniversary (after the Flower Festival) by introducing pew cushions downstairs in church. The cost will be in the region £4,200 funded from donations – so please be generous!

I can't help thinking that this is nowhere near enough given that few churches get to celebrate their 500th anniversary and we will never again get another opportunity to celebrate this significant milestone in our history.

So, here's a challenge - our 500th anniversary year is upon us and there's no time to lose - so let's do something about it!

Therefore, if you have any ideas for social or special events or any other ways in which we can celebrate our 500th, then please let me know.



**Christopher Saxton's Map (1577)
showing 'Cockley Chapel'**

Actually, come to think of it, please allow me to rephrase that; if you have any ideas for social or special events or any other ways in which we can celebrate our 500th, **AND ARE PREPARED TO MAKE THEM HAPPEN**, then please let me know. I'm sure all of us can think of a shed load of things we would like to see happen during our 500th year but, as with other things in life (Church life included) unless we are prepared to put some effort into making them a reality, they will remain no more than pipe dreams.

Church life is not a spectator sport so, let's get busy!

And we're celebrating another special anniversary this year too – not so much a BOGOF as two celebrations for the price of one! Our Mothers' Union branch is 100 years young this year, which is a fantastic achievement! So Mothering Sunday this year promises to be extra special.

Perhaps this is a good moment to give our branch a big plug. They always welcome new members – in fact I should say 'we' because I'm a member too (so, yes, men can join) and having attended the Christmas meal last month I can categorically state that we really do like to enjoy ourselves! Modesty prevents me from posting any photos on Facebook.

And there's more 2015 is the 800th anniversary of Magna Carta, the foundation stone of English liberties. We really ought to squeeze in a celebration of the signing of this important document at some point in our 2015 calendar.

So, we have a lot to look forward to in 2015!

Every Blessing

Dave